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vation must conform, while the new encourages originality by allowing the utmost latitude in expressing the results of observation; the old system tends to retard the development of geologic science, and to restrict its practical application by explicitly postulating its completeness, while the new promotes geology and extends its useful applications by providing the means of expressing discoveries in new as well as in old lines of investigations."

This letter, so far as we understand it, postulates both the objections we have mentioned above, and which we have shown to be groundless.

The Congress of Berlin did not think it advisable to change the system of coloration which had been, in its main features, in use for half a century, and the American Committee has accepted its decision. In this the committee has adopted the views of utility generally entertained in Europe. The committee, at its Albany meeting, however, expressly insisted on the necessity of incorporating into the general system all new and additional details to be derived from the explorations conducted in non-European countries, thus providing for the contingency referred to by Major Powell in the letter above quoted.

A great deal of labor devolves on the Congress and its committees. Their only reward is the belief that their work is a useful one, and the confidence that, if well done, it will endure, so far as it goes, as a permanent standard of estimation for the entire world, and for all time.

RECENT LITERATURE.

Proceedings of the American Society of Microscopists.[1]— The most notable of the papers read at the Chautauqua meeting of this society were the address of the president, Dr. Thomas J. Burrill, on bacteria and disease; Professor Hamilton L. Smith's contribution to the life-history of the Diatomaceæ; the papers of H. A. Weber and Thomas Taylor on butter and its adulterations, and that of Dr. George E. Fell on *Demodex folliculorum* in diseases of the human face. The first of these is an interesting presen-

[1] Proceedings of the American Society of Microscopists, Ninth Annual Meeting, held at Chautauqua, N. Y., August 10, 11, 12, and 13, 1886. Buffalo, N. Y., 1886, pp. 243, pls. 7.

tation of the part played by bacteria in disease, and gives many facts which fully support his conclusions. Dr. Smith's elaborately illustrated paper is better than most of the American diatom literature, as it deals with structure rather than with "resolution." The papers upon the detection of adulterated butter seem conclusive that the microscope alone is not sufficient to decide in all cases, or, at least, until new tests are discovered.

There can be no doubt that this society is doing a good work, and while it is the means of publishing much that is crude, and which might better be left in manuscript, it still serves as a centre for many who otherwise would not belong to any scientific association. To the charge that sufficient censorship is not exercised in the acceptation of papers for publication, the much larger American Association for the Advancement of Science is equally open. Indeed, such criticism applies with much more force to the latter than to the former association, for with a total of about three hundred and seventy-five members the Microscopical Society have a very substantial financial balance on hand, while the larger American Association, with a membership of eighteen hundred and eighty-six, are several thousand dollars in debt.

The Fourth Report of the Bureau of Ethnology.[1]—The present volume keeps up the high standard of the series and deserves more space than our limits will allow. The report proper of the director details the operations of the bureau in the fiscal year 1882–83, while the accompanying papers, five in number, have far more general interest. Two more papers were prepared for the present volume,—one by Professor Cyrus Thomas on the burial mounds of the Northern United States, the other by Charles C. Royce on the relations of the Cherokees to the colonial governments,—but were postponed to the next volume from lack of room. The first of the papers now before us is confessedly a preliminary study by Colonel Garrick Mallery of the picture-writing of the North American Indians. In it no conclusions are drawn, but the paper, which is fully illustrated, aims to present the material already collected as a guide for future collections. Notwithstanding this fact the paper is of great interest, and possibly gains from the fact that each reader is able to form his own conclusions unwarped by any theory of the writer. The impression the article creates in the present reviewer is that the simplest explanation of any pictograph is most likely to be the right one, and any forced or symbolical interpretation is apt to violate the nature of at least the Indians of North America. The other articles of the volume relate to pottery. Three by Mr. William H. Holmes deal respectively with

[1] Fourth Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology to the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, 1882–83, by J. W. Powell, Director. 4to, pp. 63 + 532, pls. 83. Washington, 1886 (1887).